

Cool and Defrost *Food Safely*

Cool

Improper cooling is one of the leading causative factors involved in foodborne illness.

Potentially hazardous food which has been cooked or heated must be cooled from 140°F to 70°F within 2 hours and from 70°F to 41°F within 4 hours. The purpose is to minimize the amount of time food is in the danger zone (the temperature range from 41°F to 140°F) where bacteria grows and multiplies the quickest.

Do not cool food out of the refrigerator or on kitchen counter tops.

When food is placed in the refrigerator, leave enough room around containers for cold air to circulate.

It may remain uncovered if protected from contamination. Food will cool faster if it is loosely covered. Food should be stirred frequently to evenly cool the food.

1 Place the food in shallow, heat conducting pans such as stainless steel. The surface area of the food will be increased and cooling time will be reduced. The depth of the food inside the pan should be no higher than 2 inches for thick foods such as rice, beans, pasta, stews and sauces. For thin liquids, such as stocks and broths, the depth of the pan should not be higher than 3 inches.

2 Separate large cuts of meat into smaller and thinner portions.

3 Use ice as an ingredient.

Defrost

Never defrost food at room temperature, out of the refrigerator or on the kitchen counter top.

1 In the refrigerator at 41°F or less. This is the safest way to prevent foodborne illness.

2 Under cold drinkable running water at 40°F or lower. Never defrost frozen potentially hazardous food in standing water. Bacteria can grow in the outer layers of food before the inside completely thaws.

3 In a microwave, if cooked immediately after.

4 As part of the cooking process. Products such as frozen meat patties can be thawed and cooked in a single step.



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